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Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/675,340

Applicant(s)

OKUYAMA, TAKASHI

Examiner

Art Unit

Gertrude Arthur-Jeanglaude

3661

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the application filed 9/30/03.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-27.
3. ☐ The drawings filed on _____ are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☒ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date 91704.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
 Paper No./Mail Date 62804, 40904, 93004
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
 of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
 Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

Gertrude A. Jeanglaude
GERTRUDE A. JEANGLAUDE
 PRIMARY EXAMINER

Information Disclosure Statement

The IDS with a line through are not considered and need to be updated by providing the serial number of the co-pending application.

Drawings

New corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in this application because Figures 7, 9 are not clear and are missing the last word "return" down the flowchart. Applicant is advised to employ the services of a competent patent draftsman outside the Office, as the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office no longer prepares new drawings. The corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The requirement for corrected drawings will not be held in abeyance.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art fails to disclose a watercraft comprising a rudder unit, a steering position input device configured to provide a position command signal indicative of a position of the rudder unit, at least one of an azimuth sensing device configured to sense an actual azimuth of the watercraft to provide an actual azimuth signal or a location sensing device configured to sense an actual location of the watercraft to provide an actual location signal, a control device configured to control the position of the rudder unit, a control data input device configured to selectively provide the control device with a first mode signal that starts a first mode of the control device and a second mode signal that starts

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a second mode of the control device, the second mode signal being accompanied by a target azimuth signal indicative of a target azimuth of the watercraft or a target location signal indicative of a target location of the watercraft, the control device controlling the position of the rudder unit based upon the position command signal in the first mode, the control device controlling the position of the rudder unit such that an actual azimuth amount designated by the actual azimuth signal generally coincides with a target azimuth amount designated by the target azimuth signal, and the control device starting the first mode in place of the second mode without the first mode signal if the position command signal changes while the control device controls the position of the rudder unit in the second mode. These limitations in combination are neither taught nor obvious by the prior art of record.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Griffith et al. (US 6299493) disclose a steering control method and apparatus for dual electric motor marine propulsion system wherein it discloses a

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technique for steering a watercraft that includes applying drive signals to first and second electric propulsion systems disposed at locations on either side of a longitudinal centerline of the craft.

Griffith et al. (US 6322406) disclose a dual electric motor marine propulsion system for watercraft and includes a pair of unitary propulsion units driven by electric motors. The units are positioned to create components of thrust, and a net or resultant thrust to navigate the watercraft in response to operator inputs.

Griffith et al. (US 6350164) disclose a dual electric motor stern drive with forward thruster control.

Bland et al. (US 6361385) disclose a dual electric motor stern drive with forward rudder control.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Gertrude Arthur-Jeanglaude whose telephone number is (703) 308-7564. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas Black can be reached on (703) 305-8233. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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September 17, 2004

Gertrude A. Jeanglaude
GERTRUDE A. JEANGLAUE
PRIMARY EXAMINER